

For the brave men and women of our founding generation, victory was far from certain. They were certain only of the cause they served—the belief that freedom is the gift of God and the right of all mankind. The strength of their convictions made possible the birth of the free Nation in which we are blessed to live.

On the Fourth of July, we also honor the sacrifices made by each American generation to secure the promises of the Declaration of Independence. For more than two centuries, from the camps of Valley Forge to the mountains of Afghanistan, Americans have served and sacrificed for the principles of our founding.

Today, a new generation of American patriots is defending our freedom against determined and ruthless enemies. At this hour, the men and women of our Armed Forces are facing danger in distant places, carrying out their missions with all the skill and honor we expect of them. And their families are enduring long separations from their loved ones with great courage and dignity. Our troops and our military families deserve all our support and gratitude, and on this Fourth of July weekend, I ask every American to find a way to thank those who defend our freedom. To find out about efforts in your community, please visit the web site [americasupportsyou.mil](http://americasupportsyou.mil).

As we celebrate the Fourth, we also remember that the promises of liberty contained in our Declaration apply to all people. Because Americans believe that freedom is an unalienable right, we value the freedom of every person in every nation. And because we are committed to the God-given worth of every life, we strive to promote respect for human dignity. Today, all who live in tyranny and all who yearn for freedom can know that America stands with them.

As citizens of this good Nation, we should be proud of our heritage, grateful for our liberty, and confident in our future. Two hundred and thirty years after America declared its independence, the spirit of '76 lives on. And our Nation remains proud to carry freedom's torch. We still place our trust in the protections of divine providence. We still pledge our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred

honor to freedom's defense. And we still believe in the promise of freedom for all.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:45 a.m. on June 30 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 1. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 30 but embargoed for release until broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

**Executive Order 13409—  
Establishing an Emergency Board To  
Investigate a Dispute Between  
Southeastern Pennsylvania  
Transportation Authority and its  
Locomotive Engineers Represented  
by the Brotherhood of Locomotive  
Engineers and Trainmen**

*July 3, 2006*

A dispute exists between Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) and its employees represented by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET).

The dispute has not heretofore been adjusted under the provisions of the Railway Labor Act, as amended, 45 U.S.C. 151–188 (RLA).

A party empowered by the RLA has requested that the President establish an emergency board pursuant to section 9A of the RLA (45 U.S.C. 159a).

Section 9A(c) of the RLA provides that the President, upon such request, shall appoint an emergency board to investigate and report on the dispute.

**Now, Therefore,** by the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 9A of the RLA, it is hereby ordered as follows:

**Section 1. Establishment of Emergency Board (Board).** There is established, effective 12:01 a.m. eastern daylight time on July 8, 2006, a Board of three members to be appointed by the President to investigate and report on this dispute. No member shall be

pecuniarily or otherwise interested in any organization of railroad employees or any carrier. The Board shall perform its functions subject to the availability of funds.

**Sec. 2. Report.** The Board shall report to the President with respect to this dispute within 30 days of its creation.

**Sec. 3. Maintaining Conditions.** As provided by section 9A(c) of the RLA, from the date of the creation of the Board and for 120 days thereafter, no change in the conditions out of which the dispute arose shall be made by the parties to the controversy, except by agreement of the parties.

**Sec. 4. Records Maintenance.** The records and files of the Board are records of the Office of the President and upon the Board's termination shall be maintained in the physical custody of the National Mediation Board.

**Sec. 5. Expiration.** The Board shall terminate upon the submission of the report provided for in section 2 of this order.

**George W. Bush**

The White House,  
July 3, 2006.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register,  
8:45 a.m., July 6, 2006]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on July 7.

### **Remarks at an Independence Day Celebration at Fort Bragg, North Carolina**

*July 4, 2006*

Thank you all. Thanks for the warm welcome. It's a pleasure to be back here at Fort Bragg—home of our Airborne and Special Forces.

I flew down on Air Force One, and our pilot, Colonel Tillman, he said, "I can open the hatch and drop you out by parachute." [Laughter] I said he had the wrong President Bush. [Laughter] Old '41, I call him—who happens to be my dad—has jumped five times with the Golden Knights of Fort Bragg. Mother appreciates you helping him down safely. [Laughter] He's the only skydiving President, and that's a distinction I think he's going to keep. [Laughter]

Ever since I left the White House this morning, I've been looking forward to coming here and saying, "Hooah!"

**Audience members.** Hooah!

**The President.** It's a pleasure to get out of Washington, to spend some time in the real "center of the universe." It's good to be with the men and women of the 8th [18th]\* Airborne Corps and the quiet professionals of the Army Special Operations Command.

I can't think of a better way to spend the Fourth of July than with the All Americans of the 82d Airborne. You're Airborne all the way, and I'm proud to be here with you. We also welcome the men and women of Pope Air Force base, who put the "air" in Airborne. I'm privileged to be in the presence of so many courageous military families who have borne the hardships of war with dignity and devotion. By supporting a loved one in uniform, you are serving our country, and America is grateful for your service and your sacrifice.

Today we mark the 230th anniversary of American independence. And on this day, when we give thanks for our freedom, we also give thanks for the men and women who make our freedom possible. Each of you have stepped forward to serve, knowing the risks and dangers that accompany freedom's defense.

I've come to thank you for your valor and to thank you for your patriotism. I've come to share with you and with the American people how your dedication and your sacrifice are helping us win the war on terror. You are serving our country at a time when our country needs you. And because of your courage, every day is Independence Day in America.

Laura sends her best and her love. I'm a lucky man that she said yes when I asked her to marry me. I appreciate Lieutenant General John Vines for his introduction. I want to thank all the commanding officers, all the sergeant majors, all who wear our uniform for welcoming me here today. It's a pleasure to be with you.

I'm honored to be here with Senator Richard Burr, United States Senator from the State of North Carolina. He strongly supports

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\* White House correction.